1	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
2	FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND  NORTHERN DIVISION
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4	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA )
5	) )
6	v. ) Criminal Docket No. WDQ-10-0770
7	GERMAN de JESUS VENTURA, )  Defendant )
8 9	Baltimore, Maryland November 26, 2013 1:02 PM to 3:07 PM
10	THE ABOVE-ENTITLED MATTER CAME ON FOR
11	SENTENCING BEFORE THE HONORABLE WILLIAM D. QUARLES, JR.
12	<u>APPEARANCES</u>
13	On behalf of the Government:
14	Michael Cunningham, Assistant U.S. Attorney
15	Rachel Yasser, Assistant U.S. Attorney
16	On behalf of Defendant German de Jesus Ventura:
17	Gerald Ruter, Esquire
18	Also present:
19	HSI Special Agent Edward Kelly Victoria Kirchgessner, Spanish Interpreter
20	Marta Goldstein, Spanish Interpreter
21	
22	Reported by:
23	Martin J. Giordano, RMR, CRR, FOCR
24	U.S. Courthouse, Room 5515 101 West Lombard Street
25	Baltimore, Maryland 21201 410-962-4504

## 1 PROCEEDINGS OF NOVEMBER 26, 2013 2 THE CLERK: All rise. The United States District 3 Court for the District of Maryland is now in session, The Honorable William D. Quarles, Jr. presiding. 4 THE COURT: Good afternoon. Please be seated. 5 Please swear the interpreter. 6 7 THE CLERK: Yes, Your Honor. Good afternoon, ladies. 8 INTERPRETER KIRCHGESSNER: Good afternoon. 9 10 (Oath administered.) 11 THE CLERK: Thank you. Please state your name for 12 the record. 13 INTERPRETER KIRCHGESSNER: Victoria Kirchgessner. INTERPRETER GOLDSTEIN: Marta Goldstein, Federal 14 15 Court-certified Spanish interpreter. Good afternoon, Your Honor. 16 17 THE CLERK: Thank you. 18 THE COURT: Good afternoon, Ms. Kirchgessner, 19 Ms. Goldstein. 20 INTERPRETER KIRCHGESSNER: Good afternoon, Your 21 Honor. 22 THE COURT: Please call the case. 23 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Good afternoon, Judge Quarles. I 24 call the case of United States versus German de Jesus Ventura, 25 Criminal Docket Number WDQ-10-0770. Michael Cunningham and

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Rachel Yasser for the United States, and with us at counsel
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       table is Homeland Security Investigations Special
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       Agent Ed Kelly.
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                 THE COURT: Counsel, Special Agent Kelly, good
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       afternoon.
                 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Good afternoon, sir.
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                 S/A KELLY: Good afternoon, Your Honor.
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                 MR. RUTER: And, Your Honor, good afternoon.
       Gerald Ruter on behalf of Mr. Ventura. We are here for
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       sentencing.
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                 THE COURT: Mr. Ruter, Mr. Ventura, good afternoon.
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                 MR. RUTER: Good afternoon, Your Honor.
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                 THE DEFENDANT: Good afternoon.
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                 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.
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                 Mr. Cunningham, have you read the presentence
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       report?
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                 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, Your Honor, I have.
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                 THE COURT: Any deletions, additions, or
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       corrections?
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                 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, as we noted in the
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       letter that we filed, our sentencing memoranda dated
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       September 23rd, 2013, the Government believes that two
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       adjustments that --
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                 THE COURT: I will go into those.
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                 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Oh, okay. None other than that,
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       Your Honor, no.
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                 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.
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                 Mr. Ruter, have you read the presentence report?
                 MR. RUTER: Yes, I have, Your Honor.
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                 THE COURT: Have you had that report translated into
       Spanish?
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                 MR. RUTER: Yes, sir, I have.
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                 THE COURT: Have you reviewed that report with
       Mr. Ventura?
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                 MR. RUTER: Yes, sir, I did.
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                 THE COURT: Was Mr. Ventura also provided a copy of
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       the report?
                 MR. RUTER: He was.
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                 THE COURT: I understand from your sentencing
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       memorandum that you have some arguments to make with respect
       to the adjustments. Beyond those, do you have any
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       corrections, deletions, or supplements to the presentence
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       report?
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                 MR. RUTER: No, sir.
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                 THE COURT: Okay. Let's turn our attention, then,
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       to the adjustments to the guidelines.
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                 MR. RUTER: Yes, Your Honor.
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                 THE COURT: And I guess we'll start with the two the
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       Government is most interested in.
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                 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, as indicated in our
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sentencing memorandum, the Government believes that a vulnerable victim adjustment of two levels is appropriate in this case. Specifically, with respect to Rebeca Dueñas Franco, the woman who was essentially the victim in the sex trafficking by force, fraud, and coercion count.

THE COURT: This is the woman whose testimony was who lived with Mr. Ventura and whom he rescued from prostitution, entered into a relationship with, then steered back into prostitution?

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, Your Honor. That's the one.

As you'll recall, she testified to actually acts of physical violence that he perpetrated against her, the discharge of a weapon in her presence, but, to go back to the issue of vulnerability, Your Honor, this was a woman who basically, as you point out, he rescued her from -- well, let me put "rescue" in quotations. I think, as I suspect Your Honor intended it, it wasn't necessarily that he saved her from that, but that he took her from one situation where she was prostituting for a man in Washington, D.C., and put her into sex trafficking in Maryland.

And, as she testified on direct and, in addition, added in cross-examination, she was a young woman who came from a foreign country with virtually no support mechanism here. Basically, the ability to make some money as a prostitute was essentially all she had. She had the language

She had an education barrier. She had a child, 1 2 which was essentially a subject of some leverage that Mr. Ventura employed, and essentially he knew well all of 3 those aspects of her character and her situation when he 4 5 compelled her and forced her to engage in prostitution activities. 6 7 The other --8 THE COURT: Let's give --9 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, sir. 10 THE COURT: -- Mr. Ruter an opportunity to respond 11 to the adjustment relating to vulnerable victim. 12 MR. RUTER: Your Honor, our position really is quite 13 to the contrary. I think the testimony of Ms. Franco made it 14 very clear that the relationship between she and Mr. Ventura 15 was a relationship of a familial type. She lived with him. He, in fact, I will say, took care of her for a period of time 16 17 before she says he forced her into prostitution. It was clearly consensual and voluntary on her 18 19 part --20 THE COURT: Looking at the evidence from the 21 Government's perspective, which I think we're probably 22 constrained to do at this point, how can you say there was no 23 coercion involved? 24 MR. RUTER: Your Honor, I don't think that 25 coercion --

THE COURT: I'm --1 2 -- changes her into a vulnerable victim. MR. RUTER: 3 THE COURT: I'm getting there. MR. RUTER: I'm sorry? 4 5 THE COURT: I'm getting there. I want to get these 6 parts. 7 MR. RUTER: Okay. 8 THE COURT: Do you wish to argue coercion, or do you just want to talk about whether she's vulnerable or not? 9 10 MR. RUTER: That's all, because the testimony is 11 clear, Your Honor, from her standpoint, it's -- I know 12 Mr. Ventura testified to the contrary. The jury obviously 13 chose to believe Ms. Franco, that she was coerced or otherwise forced. So that is the state of the record. I admit that. 14 15 THE COURT: Okay. So a young, poorly-educated, single mother relying on the Defendant for her support and 16 sustenance in a foreign country and being subjected, according 17 18 to the evidence, to physical violence, that's not a vulnerable 19 victim? 20 MR. RUTER: Your Honor, I believe, to be a vulnerable victim, she would have needed to have started out 21 22 in that condition, and that's not the way the relationship 23 started out. I don't know why the relationship changed, and, 24 quite frankly, I don't think the record is clear either, but I

don't see how you can change what I do not believe was a

vulnerable victim when they first met and dated and spent 1 2 considerable time with each other when the illegal activity 3 commenced. I don't see that the transition can be made from being unvulnerable to now she is in vulnerable, and that's the 4 5 status of my argument. THE COURT: That's accepting, I guess, the premise 6 7 that she was not vulnerable when she entered into the 8 relationship, and perhaps she was not, at the initial part of the relationship, abused, but she still had the 9 10 characteristics; again, the language difficulty, the child, 11 stranger in a strange land, limited economic opportunities. 12 That was all there. The only thing that wasn't there at the 13 beginning of the relationship was the abuse -- the physical 14 abuse. 15 MR. RUTER: That part, Your Honor, is true. I admit 16 she had --17 THE COURT: And you just told me that the physical 18 abuse is not the key to the consideration. 19 MR. RUTER: It's not. What I'm agreeing with Your 20 Honor is I admit she had limited skills to speak English. She 21 had limited skills for employment. That part is true when the 22 relationship started. 23 THE COURT: And she was, therefore, isolated, wasn't 24 she?

MR. RUTER: Your Honor, I think her testimony was

she was isolated when she started the relationship in terms of 1 2 prostitution, that her testimony was that she was kept inside of a house, and she really couldn't go by herself. That's 3 what I understood her testimony to be. 4 THE COURT: She was confined --5 MR. RUTER: It was not her testimony when the 6 7 relationship started. 8 THE COURT: No, but she was confined? 9 MR. RUTER: That was her -- yes, sir. That was her 10 testimony. 11 THE COURT: Okay. So your premise is that, if she 12 was not -- well, if she wasn't mistreated at the beginning of 13 the relationship, any change in the treatment does not transform her into a vulnerable victim? 14 15 MR. RUTER: Yes. If she was not vulnerable to begin, then the fact that she began prostituting -- and, Your 16 17 Honor, I'm not even too sure the testimony is clear that the 18 threats started at the very beginning of the prostitution. 19 I'm not even too sure that's clear. 20 There was clear testimony that the threats did occur 21 during the prostitution when she refused to do what she 22 alleges Mr. Ventura had asked her to do, but it's not clear to 23 me the testimony was that the relationship stopped and, rather

than some kind of loving, caring relationship, it was

immediately changed into a, "You do this, or else," and the

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"else" was acts of violence. I don't think that's the state of the record either. That being the case, I don't think that the threshold is met that she was vulnerable to begin with.

I can't imagine, Judge Quarles, that, because a person may be a bit uneducated or may be in a foreign land, that that by itself should reach the threshold of making that person vulnerable.

THE COURT: But I don't think the Government's argued that that by itself was what did it. I think the Government is saying that it was a list of things, which included her youth, the single parenthood, her lack of language skills, the apparent lack of marketable vocational skills, that it was, for want of a better word, a constellation of things that made her vulnerable.

MR. RUTER: Your Honor, I understand the argument. I stick by mine. She was not vulnerable to begin with, and the fact that there may have been some threats later on in the relationship does not make her become a vulnerable person at that stage, especially given the relationship she had already had before.

She clearly knew, Your Honor, what was going to be required for her if, in fact, her testimony is to be believed, as far as prostituting herself. I don't see how the Government can just go from what I think was a somewhat normal relationship for some period of time, and then turn her into a

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vulnerable victim because she then began prostituting herself, and thereafter perhaps some kind of coercion or force was used.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Ruter.

Mr. Cunningham, you get the last words.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Your Honor.

You alluded to her status, and then you used the term that I think is appropriate. There were a constellation of matters of background, character, you know, things that -her education and lack of ability to work, the fact that she was an illegal alien in the United States, didn't have the support structure. But, fundamentally, when the Defendant initiated this association with -- and I quess you could say it developed into a relationship of sorts -- she was prostituting for a man, and she -- according to her testimony, she wanted to get out of that. She was desperate to get out of that, and he did offer her that apparent lifeline, and he got her out of it, at least temporarily, and created that appearance of the rescue, if you will, only to take advantage of the fact that then all those vulnerabilities redounded to his ability to essentially take advantage of and compel her to undertake, you know, prostituting on his behalf.

THE COURT: Thank you.

I think the combination of factors that we discussed -- the cultural, the educational factors, the single

parenthood, plus, as the Government correctly reminds me, that it wasn't, Mr. Ruter, a relationship of someone who walked in off the street, engaged in a romantic relationship, and that deteriorated. The fact of the matter was she was, at the time they met, already in an exploited position. That is, she was working as a prostitute here. And that person was, viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the Government, lured into a relationship that certainly and apparently fairly quickly began to feature physical abuse as well as mental abuse. So I think the victim-related adjustment under Guideline § 3A1.1(b)(1) is appropriate, and I will adjust two levels upward.

MR. RUTER: And, Your Honor, if I could just add --I think you know this part was coming -- in light of Alleyne versus United States, as you might have seen from my last submission, I would further argue that this Court should not make such a finding which will, in fact, increase his advisory quideline range, which will then cause this Court to most likely give him the sentence being effected by that guideline range. Rather, I believe this item should be submitted to a jury, should be charged in the charging document, submitted to a jury for their consideration, and then found beyond a reasonable doubt.

THE COURT: I understand your argument --

MR. RUTER: Thank you, sir.

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THE COURT: -- and it is preserved.

Next adjustment.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, the other matter for adjustment the Government believes is appropriate here -- and it's identified in Paragraph 4(h) of the Government's sentencing memorandum -- is that there should be a two-level upward adjustment because of obstruction of justice. The Government acknowledges that indeed a defendant simply who testifies and may be found guilty does not, per se, warrant the obstruction of justice enhancement, but the Court must do an analysis to determine if, in fact, the testimony could constitute perjury, and we've identified the legal test here.

The Defendant, as indicated -- and we don't have the transcript of his testimony, but, as I think Your Honor will remember, virtually denied everything, including knowing any of the witnesses who identified him as an employer, but for I think he did acknowledge -- well, he did acknowledge knowing Ms. Rebeca Dueñas Franco. My recollection is he denied knowing his co-defendant, Mr. Fuertes.

But, significantly -- and of course Mr. Fuertes obviously didn't testify against him, but people like Carlos Ascencio -- it was Carlos Campos who did work for him and testified, and even some of the people whose credibility was perhaps more attacked, the -- Rapalo and Franco -- Francisco -- excuse me -- Ramirez. They all testified that

they knew him, that they had been working for him at some point in time, and his testimony was a wholesale denial of knowing anybody, being involved in anything, knowing anything as -- "I don't know anything," as I have some recollection of hearing that from him. "I don't know anybody. I don't know anything." But it was a wholesale denial of being involved in any way whatsoever with the prostitution business. He did acknowledge his engaging prostitutes as a customer with respect to Ms. Rebeca Dueñas Franco, but that was as far as he went in the context of that admission.

THE COURT: Is there a difference -- and I don't want to pull you out of your argument, but is there a difference between a defendant who takes the stand and essentially relies on a general denial of guilt as opposed to one, say, who testifies in great detail to a false alibi or to any of the other contested factual issues at trial?

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Judge, I do -- I think that the Court would find that there would be a distinction there, specifically because a general denial conceivably could include things that may be intent-related. I'm --

THE COURT: It's, in essence, no more than a not quilty plea, isn't it?

MR. CUNNINGHAM: It is, Your Honor, and, so long as it went that far, I don't think that the Court would be inclined to think that it would constitute the kind of

testimony that the Court believes is necessary to warrant this enhancement. The Court recognizes, obviously, that it's not trying to chill a defendant's right to testify. It's just saying, if you do choose to testify, you're constrained to testify in the same way any other witness is; that is, truthfully.

THE COURT: There is a materiality requirement.

Does the materiality requirement mean something more than -
it's a tick on the list of elements. Does the materiality

requirement mean that essentially the story has to be facially

believable? Not to succeed, but that it must have had some

reasonable chance of success, which probably was not the case

here? Isn't that sort of the essence of materiality?

MR. CUNNINGHAM: I believe so, Your Honor, and what I'm looking at is the citation or the quote that we included that may come close to that particular point, where it says, if a defendant testified falsely about a non-material matter or lack of requisite mens rea because false testimony was the result of confusion, mistake, or faulty memory, it wouldn't get over that threshold, but --

THE COURT: No. I'm asking, in addition to the list, that the facially unbelievable testimony, is that material?

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Well, yes. The Government submits it is, Your Honor. For one thing, to the extent that the

individuals who testified that they knew him, that they had 1 2 worked for him, and then his testimony is that I don't even 3 know them, one, it goes directly counter to the testimony of them as to their association, how they were associated with 4 him, and that, in fact, they worked in an illegal enterprise 5 Inherent in the, "I don't know them," is, "They 6 7 didn't work for me. Everything they've said as far as knowing 8 me and having been employed in my brothels is false," and I think it's material as to the question of: Was he, in fact, 9 10 engaged in this illegal enterprise? Did he have people, you 11 know, working as agents for him in that context? 12 THE COURT: The question is merely: Does 13 materiality require believability? 14 MR. CUNNINGHAM: I don't know the answer to that, 15 but I don't believe so, Your Honor. 16 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. 17 Mr. Ruter, the obstruction adjustment? 18 MR. RUTER: Your Honor, I was looking more at the 19 willful intent to deceive element of obstruction in that --20 THE COURT: Well, that would require me to believe 21 that he was motivated by innocent motivation. 22 MR. RUTER: It would. It would. 23 THE COURT: That's a fairly high hurdle, Mr. Ruter. 24 MR. RUTER: Judge, you were here for that testimony 25 obviously, and I'm trying to figure out how to put it

politely, Your Honor, but you've put it as politely as it can be and couched it in terms of materiality. The testimony was so out of line with anything else that had been heard or seen in the courtroom over the course of a couple weeks that it's difficult how one could at any glance determine that what was being said was material to any issue.

A lot of what was said was not even responsive to questions. It was just an ongoing rambling discussion, if you will, by Mr. Ventura as to what he was doing. I think he did admit, Your Honor, that he was aware that prostitution was going on, that he called the police about it. His position has always been that he's not a leader of a prostitution ring; somebody else is, as he had testified to.

That may not, by the way, be -- the fact that somebody else may be a leader of a prostitution ring may, in fact, be true, but his assertions were always just in very broad brushes, and it's difficult for me to see how anyone could believe that anything that he testified to was material to any issue before the Court, and that he was trying to deceive anybody. He was just talking -- over my strenuous objection that he would talk at all, he was just talking for the sake of talking, and that was --

THE COURT: I admit that is one way of looking at the broad testimony. Another way of looking at it is, though, that essentially it contested every material element of the

offense, a general denial of it, and, to be fair to the Government, it was a bit more detailed than a general denial.

MR. RUTER: Yes. When asked maybe the same question thirty times and it came out differently every time, one might find a grain of materiality in that, but I still stand by the argument, Judge, that, when you examine that testimony, it's difficult to see how whatever he said was material to any specific thing, and I do repeat, because I think it's so appropriate in his case, that I don't think he willfully intended to deceive anybody. He simply wanted to have his day in court and to say whatever he wanted to say, even whether it was in response to any question being thrown at him.

**THE COURT:** Okay. Last word?

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, to go back to sort of the basics, where the rule defines "material," it states that it's a fact, a statement, that, if believed, and I gather that's the whole struggle.

THE COURT: I suppose --

MR. CUNNINGHAM: When you say "believable" --

THE COURT: Is it believable, yes.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Well, I suppose, if somebody testified to something so preposterous that, you know, it's impossible to believe, but, to the extent that the testimony was -- and I recall Your Honor's perhaps point as to the length of the cross-examination, but the point was it was a

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repeated response to or attempt to direct questions relevant to the whole investigation. It included things like outlandish allegations against the Government investigators, the law enforcement officers that interviewed him, and arguably --

THE COURT: Well, those things, I would find are probably not material.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Except that, Your Honor, to the extent -- well, and, as you pointed out, we did not intend to -- we did not introduce evidence of his statement that was made to the investigators, but the testimony of the investigators, both Agent Kelly and Detective Hartlove, included a lot of the things that they learned and developed through the course of their investigation, and, to the extent that his testimony bore on -- it was a character -- an attempted character assassination in some respects of particularly Special Agent Kelly, and, if the conclusion had been reached that there was some personal animus by Agent Kelly against Mr. Ventura, it's certainly conceivable that one or more jurors may have concluded they should reject the testimony of the agent and -- regardless of what they did with the other testimony of the Defendant, they should reject it.

So I do think that you can look at those things and find they were material, but, going back to the more specific

denials of criminal conduct and engaging in the prostitution business, that's essentially what his testimony was -- a wholesale rejection of any criminal conduct, at least any charged criminal conduct, and the Government contends that those allegations were, in fact, material.

There is another aspect of this obstruction that we did not brief, and I am not -- the rule, or the guidelines don't really address this very well, but I think the Court would well recall that Mr. Ventura's conduct in court, not just during his testimony, but at other times during the proceedings, really had a very obstructive quality to it, and I would submit that it, in its entirety, warrants the enhancement.

THE COURT: Thank you.

Although the issue of materiality obviously raises some concerns for me, without wishing to establish a right for the Defendant to take the stand and defend with an outrageous bit of testimony, I think materiality is clearly related to the subject matter more so than to whether the testimony itself is believable. I think -- and, again, I have some discomfort with it, but I think the Defendant gives wildly implausible testimony about a material matter, such as his participation, such as whether he was in the business, such as others' participation in it. I think that, coupled with its falsity, which is clear, and with its evident willful intent

to deceive, which is obviously the reason why he took the stand and testified -- it wasn't just an exercise in storytelling skills.

So, although, as I said, because of the sort of facially incredible testimony in total, I have some hesitance -- well, hesitance is too strong a word. I feel that the obstruction adjustment has sufficient basis, and, accordingly, I will give the Government the two-level upward adjustment for obstruction, notwithstanding the concerns about the facially incredible testimony.

That leaves us at 42 offense level, Criminal History Category I guidelines for Counts 1 through 6, with the exception of those for which there are lower statutory maximums, at 360 to life.

I will hear from the Government on sentencing.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, obviously Mr. Fuertes' sentencing proceeding has already transpired, and you heard from the Government as to the nature of this crime already, and I don't see that any new victims who perhaps had not previously heard the Government's position with this regard are present. We stated our position in the sentencing memoranda, so I will try to be brief here, just reiterating that collectively these kind of crimes are really some of the worst forms of exploitive behavior that a criminal can engage in — using other people for the financial gain and basically

making them work in such degrading conditions and, as you've heard us repeat several times, the kind of squalor that these brothels represented, the transient nature, the lack of essentially, you know, kind of the decent human contact that people want and need.

I know I've heard you speak several times to your understanding of why aliens want to come to the United States and will go to desperate measures to come here illegally, risking a lot of things, and indeed suffering as Ms. Dueñas Franco did, apparently a rape from a coyote while she was being transported up here. They come with the expectation of things being better in the United States, and sometimes they're sent under the conditions that they engage in the conduct, and I apologize because, off the top of my head, I've forgotten the name of the witness who, you'll recall, she — she came down from New Jersey. The father of her children, who was with her children in Mexico, made her come to the United States and made her engage in prostitution —

MS. YASSER: Margarita Santiago.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Yeah. Margarita Santiago. Thank you.

And then she got into the pool, if you will, and was -- that exploitation continued and was furthered by the Defendant and other individuals working in the same industry.

It's a serious crime to begin with, and then, when you overlay

the force, fraud, and coercion component, the law recognizes just how much more aggravated it is.

In the instant case, Mr. Ventura had weapons. We heard the testimony from Carlos Campos that he showed those weapons. We heard the testimony from -- or a weapon. Excuse me. Not weapons. That he had Fuertes display the gun, and that was in the context of the threat to Victor.

Ms. Dueñas Franco testified that he had a gun, that he brandished it, and that he, in fact, discharged it in her presence as essentially one of these tools in compelling her compliance with his dictates and his demand that she engage in sex with people she or a person that she otherwise didn't want to engage in sex with, all of which is to come around to the fact that the Government obviously contends that this is a very serious crime.

We actually join Mr. Ruter in contending that we did not present or ask the jury to find that the brandishing was found and, hence, per the *Alleyne* decision, the Court should only impose a 60-month consecutive sentence to whatever sentence you otherwise impose for the other crimes, which brings us to: What is the Government's recommendation? And, as we indicated --

THE COURT: Before you get there, there are some points raised in Mr. Ruter's letter that I wanted to discuss with you --

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, sir. 1 2 THE COURT: -- in terms of things that should be 3 mitigating in the sentencing. And, Mr. Ruter, your memorandum was filed under 4 I granted your --5 seal. MR. RUTER: Yes, sir. 6 7 THE COURT: -- motion for that. Is there any --8 come up to the bench, counsel. 9 MR. RUTER: Thank you, sir. 10 THE COURT: Come up to the bench. 11 (Whereupon, a conference was held at the bench.) 12 THE COURT: Yes, Mr. Cunningham? 13 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Your Honor. 14 I wanted to address as a follow-up to the 15 conversation at the bench specifically on that matter of character as it will factor in -- and I appreciate that this 16 17 is not necessarily sequentially in the necessary scheme, but 18 what I was looking for was a letter that Mr. Ruter had 19 submitted along with its sentencing memorandum on behalf of Mr. Ventura. It was written by a gentleman who, at the time, 20 21 was part of a program in the District of Columbia that was 22 assisting individuals in that case. Of course, it was a 23 pretrial detainee, not an inmate. But the author was an 24 individual who essentially had a program through the

University of the District of Columbia, and I apologize

because I'm not immediately putting my hand on the letter, but what I recall -- and I tried to get in touch with the writer actually to follow up on it, but he's no longer with the program, and, as you just heard, I wasn't able to be forwarded to him to direct my question to him.

But he spoke to the fact that -- and his letter was written in May or June of 2012, so a good ten months before the trial took place, but there was a suggestion in his letter that Mr. Ventura had self-awareness as to how he found himself in the predicament that he was in, and, candidly, Your Honor, with respect to the writer -- and I appreciate that he's got a laudable objective with the program that he has, but I view with a great deal of scepticism that kind of statement in light of Mr. Ventura's trial testimony, how he behaved in court, and essentially how he has attempted and what I would consider to be manipulative kind of behavior.

Factoring into that character context that you're addressing with regard to the § 3553(a) factors, I believe that much more of what we have seen of Mr. Ventura with regard to relations with authority is intending or attempting to effectively manipulate the system, and, if he can see something to his advantage, he may pursue it as far as it may lead him until a determination is made that it is either not redounding to his benefit or the circumstances are different than what he had anticipated.

THE COURT: What was his manipulation of the system and how much is sort of the good faith flailings around of someone who doesn't understand the American justice system and trying desperately to defend himself?

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Well, Judge, I suppose I think
that, while Mr. Ventura is not educated in the American
justice system, you're certainly -- you've been the recipient
of numerous pleadings from him, some of which, I suspect, are
the product of communication with other -- the jailhouse
lawyers we all know are out there and giving individuals a lot
of misinformation along with information, but, for example,
just the repeated essentially communications regarding counsel
and coming in, the allegations with regard to the quality of
representation, the allegations regarding the trial
preparation, which Your Honor is -- as you made the
observation in your memorandum in support of the order that
you issued yesterday, he was represented excellently by a very
well-prepared attorney, and the representations to the
contrary are just -- you know, there is just no merit to them.

Given the motions that were filed, the actual aggressive litigation in his support, there is simply no support for the contentions that he makes, and yet it effectively disrupts the process, if you will, which is why the Government would characterize it as essentially an attempt to manipulate as opposed to simply the floundering of somebody

who doesn't have a clue as to what he's doing in the communications with the Court.

I mean, to the extent that -- and I go back, if I may, to the allegations against Agent Kelly and other law enforcement officers. Now there is this contention that he was injured when he was taken into custody. Well, it wasn't something we necessarily dealt with in the trial because, as you observed, we didn't introduce the statement that he made when he was arrested on November 15th of 2010.

But, to go even farther back to the motions hearing, when that was the subject of testimony, it was pretty clear that there was no -- he -- when he was taken into custody, it was out -- I believe it was on interstate or -- excuse me -- on Route 50, in the vicinity of Annapolis. There was no evidence whatsoever of any physical force being used, certainly no excessive physical force, none when he was in the presence of Agent Kelly and Detective Hartlove, and yet now that's a constant refrain in his communication, that, oh, he was injured when he was taken into custody.

I'm not sure what the ultimate intent may be of that, but I would characterize it as a manipulative kind of conduct as opposed to something that is a credible allegation that would merit any consideration in this context, either as to guilt or sentencing.

And, with regard to the matter at which we were

speaking at the bench, you know, I would submit that that really was an effort intended not so much to provide some kind of -- well, it was mostly with regard to how might this benefit the Defendant and his ability to change the conditions of his detention at the time.

Your Honor, did you want me to speak to any of the other matters that Mr. Ruter raised in the sentencing memorandum?

THE COURT: Only those that you wish to address.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Okay. I don't actually take issue with the Court recommending a place of confinement. I acknowledge that certainly most inmates can benefit through vocational training, through access to mental health. I know, as Mr. Ruter alluded to at the bench, that he intends to present to you extracts from Mr. Ventura's medical records, which Mr. Ventura, in his pro se submissions of late, has been essentially harping on the lack of attention.

I would simply observe that I too, as a result of actually issuing a trial subpoena for them to present them today, received -- well, it's 229 pages plus an additional, oh, I think around 30 pages, so over 240 pages worth of medical records that essentially document the attention that's been provided to Mr. Ventura since he's been in pretrial detention in the custody of the Marshals.

Now, a lot of this is duplicative. Frankly, it's

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hard to figure out day by day what is the sole entry? So I accept that there is a lot of redundancy, but one of the things that seems pretty obvious in this volume of paperwork -- I confess that I -- in the time I had, I did not get through all of it, but that Mr. Ventura had access to and availed himself of the medical attention that is afforded to individuals who are in pretrial detention, both in the Chesapeake Detention Facility, as well as the facility in Washington, D.C., and he made his complaints known.

It appears from my ability to discern these entries, some of which are in doctor speak and others which are more susceptible to a layman's interpretation, that there were assessments of his well-being, and, on one hand, while he complains -- just to take as an example of sort of the complaints as it factors into what I was earlier suggesting as maybe manipulative kind of things, where he complains of the -- of, you know, back pain and artifacts from the abuse that he suffered when he was arrested in November of 2010, I note that, in the same time frame when he was, I quess, complaining of stomach distress and some other problems in July of 2013, he came in from an injured -- an injured wrist that he got playing basketball, so -- which I am not gainsaying that he may have injured his wrist playing basketball, but presumably his physical situation was not such as to preclude him from participating in the limited

recreational activities afforded to pretrial detainees. Most of the entries in here suggest that, you know, other than the complaints, he presents in a fairly healthy way.

I know Mr. Ruter is going to focus on the mental health things. I acknowledge that there are certainly entries in here suggesting that there are issues of depression and situational anxiety, those kinds of things. I would imagine it's appropriate for somebody to be depressed who is sitting in pretrial detention and facing the possibility of a lengthy jail sentence. Dealing with that kind of anxiety and stress and the depression is something which I believe the Bureau of Prisons has, not only in a facility like Butner, but in virtually all of its facilities, opportunities for inmates to come to terms with the situation, to understand better how they got there and how they can, you know, avoid in the future essentially resurrecting those situations that got them there in the first place.

So I don't take exception to the appropriateness of that and a recommendation from the bench for those kinds of treatment for him, but, to come back to what is indeed the Government's recommendation for a very serious sentence -- and it's -- as I pointed out, it's at the lower end -- not the lowest end, but at the lower end of the guideline range, which is 360 months to life, so essentially we're recommending a 366-month sentence in there, plus the 60 months consecutive

because of the 924(c) count.

I don't dispute that that's a very serious sentence, Your Honor. Mr. Ventura's crimes were very serious. They were very dangerous, very harmful to people, and the Government has a great deal of concern that there is no suggestion in this context -- and, respecting obviously that he's denying his complicity, and I would anticipate there would be an appeal, but there is not one scintilla of essentially remorse, if you will. Even had he acknowledged that, okay, sure, I was -- you know, I knew Ms. Rebeca Dueñas Franco, I found her in this situation and removed her from it, but there is no awareness. There is no self-awareness evidenced by Mr. Ventura's conduct that would lead the Government to conclude that anything less than a very serious sentence will be sufficient but not more than necessary to achieve the ends of justice.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you.

THE COURT: Mr. Ruter?

MR. RUTER: Your Honor, first of all, could I impose upon the Clerk to call the Magistrate Judge --

THE COURT: Yes.

MR. RUTER: -- before whom I should be there at
2 o'clock? It would be appreciated.

Your Honor, while I'm speaking, could I ask the

Court to mark this as an exhibit, please, as Defense

Exhibit 1. It can be placed under seal, Your Honor, please.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: No objection whatsoever.

THE COURT: Thank you. Defense 1 is admitted, will be admitted under seal.

MR. RUTER: And, Your Honor, I want the Court to know that -- I hope you know my habits are not to be giving -- supplying documents to His Honor as you're determining what to do in a significant case. Mr. Cunningham and I had discussions the last several weeks about trying to resolve this medical issue situation. I have seen Mr. Ventura weeks and weeks ago, and I was right in front of him when he signed documents allowing the Super Max to turn over his medical records to me.

I then spent, I think, four or five phone calls and two visits to the facility, Your Honor, where the facility denied that they ever received the document. They never received the request. And then, last Friday, I think it was, this very thick volume of documents comes to me, where the very paper that Mr. Ventura signed weeks before is the first page in the documents.

So I was disappointed that somebody at the facility would continue to deny that they received it, and then get, three weeks later, they appear, but they appeared a bit late. For that, I apologize.

THE COURT: Are there parts of the record that you 1 2 want to direct me to? MR. RUTER: Your Honor, I pulled out only those 3 particular pages that I thought the Court might wish to see, 4 but I will summarize those, Your Honor, as I go through my 5 remarks. And Your Honor can feel very --6 7 (Whereupon, Ms. Goldstein leaves the courtroom.) 8 THE COURT: You're not asking me to take a recess to review these? 9 10 MR. RUTER: Your Honor, I am not. 11 THE COURT: Okay. 12 MR. RUTER: I am not. And, if you feel the need, 13 Your Honor, you'll tell me so, but I am not asking the Court 14 to do that. I will make comments as I proceed. 15 Your Honor, I want the Court to -- and I know you will -- look at the fact that, prior to this conviction and 16 17 the activities which brought Mr. Ventura here, he has no 18 criminal record. He has one criminal history point for a 19 driving under the influence sometime ago, and he's been in 20 this country since 1997, Your Honor. 21 Now, I find it somewhat remarkable that a person who 22 has been here now from 1997 until 2007, when these activities 23 were alleged to have commenced -- of course we -- he was 24 arrested November 2010, and he's been incarcerated since, but

it appears as if he's a person who was attempting to make his

way as best he could as a non-English-speaking person with limited skills and so on, and trying to make a life for himself and his family during at least that ten-year period, quite frankly, until the day that he was arrested.

The fact that he was only arrested a couple of times, only one of which led to the conviction for the DUI, speaks to the fact that, by and large, it appears as if Mr. Ventura was living a law-abiding life for a very lengthy portion of his stay in this country.

He was engaged in legitimate employment, Your Honor, I suggest, throughout the course of that ten-year period. He was also engaged in legitimate employment during the course of this conspiracy. I think the Court heard testimony from the special agent that they saw him from time to time apparently doing some kind of work -- he had a work van. He had work things in it, and he, in fact, was, on occasion, doing work unrelated to the prostitution situation in which he was, we now know, embroiled. We know that from his income tax returns, Your Honor, that were introduced during his testimony, which demonstrate that he, in fact, had income from his home improvement company for the last several years before his arrest.

Your Honor, you have before you -- and I wanted to address the question of his medical records, because I'm going to ask the Court to consider recommending FCI Butner, which is

a medical facility. I believe that the records you have before you speak to the fact that he may very well benefit from being medically evaluated and treated by those in the mental health community, and FCI Butner is such a facility, and I'd ask you to consider making that recommendation.

Those records show, Your Honor, that, according to doctors who have examined him -- and he's been looked at quite a bit. Mr. Cunningham's point is well taken. Mr. Ventura alleges no help, and perhaps it may be more accurate to say that what help he's received, it simply hasn't benefited him as much as he would have liked, which is not uncommon for any of us who may suffer from different kinds of maladies.

But those records show, Your Honor, that he has suffered from depression, from sleeping problems. On Page 38 -- you'll notice that the page numbers are numbered in the upper right-hand corner, Your Honor. If you look to Page 38, you'll notice a host of drugs that he's been on -- on, again, for the last few years. He had the same drugs while he was in Washington, D.C., I'm told.

Those drugs are, Your Honor, used for anxiety, used for allergies, acid reflux, hypertension. Some are antipsychotic, some are antibiotics, and some are to treat manic-depressive disorders, as I had reviewed those medicines before I just made my comment about what those medicines are for. The records that support those, again, are in front of

the Court.

You'll note, Your Honor, at Page 59, that the staff believes that Mr. Ventura attempted suicide back in February of 2012. Now, Mr. Ventura, I think, denied it, and I would submit, Your Honor, that most people who are incarcerated who act in that way oftentimes will deny it because they recognize what's about to happen. What's about to happen is you'll be in segregation. You'll be denied any activities of any type, and some folks -- a lot of folks don't want to be segregated and denied what privileges they otherwise might have, but that -- on Page 59 of the documents you have, the doctor indicates that he sees a bipolar disorder also in Mr. Ventura.

The documents also indicate, Your Honor, that, at the time they were written, he had been in segregation for over four months. I think that time actually is much longer than that by the time his segregation ended.

Your Honor, I would argue that what you saw in this courtroom over the course of a couple of weeks during the trial and what we see in the pleadings to which Mr. Cunningham alluded actually makes the point. Mr. Ventura has some mental health issues that need to be addressed. One can argue that he's malingering, and one could argue that he's manipulating, and I understand why the Government says that, but I believe that one can also argue, just as effectively and I believe more accurately, supported by the documents you have in front

of you, that this man does have significant mental health issues.

He has told me, Your Honor -- it took him a long time to do that, because I think, as the Court knows, perhaps from time to time, Mr. Ventura and I have not seen eye to eye, and I respect that. That does not concern me or my representation of him in the least, but he's told me that he always feels paranoid. He feels that I'm out to get him, that Mr. Cunningham's out to get him, that you're out to get him, and that everybody's out to get him, because that's the way he feels his life has unfolded since his arrest back in 2010.

So what does he do? He files the same pleadings over and over and over again. Even though we've talked about the fact that I -- I said, "Mr. Ventura, I can only do so much for you. We have a system. We have a procedure. We have a protocol. We have Rules of Evidence," and he just could not accept it. He could not understand it, and I did not interpret that as his trying to, in some way, take issue and butt heads with me. I didn't see it that way at all.

He did it with all his lawyers. We've all had the same difficulty with him. It's because there is something in his mental makeup that needs to be addressed, which I hope can be addressed while he is incarcerated.

You'll see, Your Honor, at Page 158 of those documents, that he was assaulted by four inmates, and there

are reasons given for that assault. The doctor noticed that Mr. Ventura had scratches to his eye, his neck. His arm was cut, and he had also bruises and contusions to his back. He didn't make it up. It happened. He self-reported why it happened. Why it happened, we may take issue with. I don't take issue with it. I think it happened just the way he told the authorities as to why it happened, and so you can imagine, when this occurred in December of 2011, and he's been incarcerated, of course, for two more years, he's been looking over his shoulder for the last two years, rightfully so.

I don't blame that on the institution,

Judge Quarles. I don't blame it on the facility in

Washington, D.C. I don't blame it on the facility here in

Baltimore. It's just the fact of what Mr. Ventura has had to
go through during his incarceration.

He attempted, Your Honor -- and he has attempted -Mr. Cunningham referred to a letter of Mr. Mallory, and it
appears as if Mr. Ventura had been a regular participant in a
parenting type class. A parenting type treatment was what
this particular gentleman was after in his attempt to help
Mr. Ventura. I also tried to reach him, and, as
Mr. Cunningham, I was unsuccessful in doing so.

The Court has seen that he participated in another program to attempt to assist himself with his educational pursuits.

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THE CLERK: Excuse me, counsel. Counsel, excuse me
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       one second.
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                 MR. RUTER: Sure.
                 (Whereupon, a conference was held at the bench off
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       the record.)
                 THE CLERK: Mr. Ruter, excuse me. Judge Gesner said
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       that -- are you available tomorrow afternoon for your
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       proceeding before her, which is a detention hearing? She says
       she can't wait today to do that, so if you could let me know
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       now if you're available sometime tomorrow afternoon.
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                 MR. RUTER: Am I before her tomorrow as well, you
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       said?
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                 THE CLERK: No. She wants to know if you are
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       available tomorrow afternoon.
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                 MR. RUTER: I think the answer is yes. I better be.
                 THE CLERK: What time is convenient for you?
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                 MR. RUTER: Whatever she says.
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                 THE CLERK: Okay. I'm sorry.
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                 MR. RUTER: My apologies.
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                 THE COURT: Yes, Mr. Ruter?
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                 MR. RUTER: Your Honor, thank you.
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                 Your Honor, I was -- in light of the fact that he
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       has made attempts to further his education -- he really has --
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       I'd ask the Court, in your J and C, to indicate or recommend
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       that he obtain his GED and that he be given as much
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educational or vocational training as is possible at the facility he might be located at.

The Court also would have noted in the PSR, Your

Honor, that he had admitted that he had used cocaine and

alcohol regularly in the last several years. I would ask the

Court to consider, if he qualifies, to be a participant in the

RDAP program should he so qualify wherever it is that he is

housed. I think that the record has been made in the PSR that

he would benefit from that kind of a program.

I'd ask the Court also, of course, to credit him from time from November 15th until today's date.

THE COURT: Yes.

MR. RUTER: Your Honor, I do know I've asked in my pleadings to the Court to impose a sentence of 240 months. The Court, as I have explained to Mr. Ventura -- something that he takes great issue with, and I don't blame him. He thinks I'm wrong. That, as to Count 6, I believe His Honor must give him -- must give him 15 years. It's my understanding the Court must give him at least five years consecutive on Count 7. Even if you didn't want to, you have to do that because Congress says so. If my math is right, that would amount to 20 years, or 240 months.

All of us here, Judge Quarles, would agree that 240 months is a long sentence. The question, of course, is whether or not that sentence is long enough in order to

satisfy the requirements of 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a), and I respectfully submit that it is.

This gentleman will be in his mid to late 50s when he is released from prison, should you give him a 240-month sentence. This is a person that will be immediately deported from this country at the termination of his jail term. I would think that anyone at any stage involved in sex trafficking with or without force, when they see that someone went to jail for 20 years as a result, I would think it would more than deter that person to disengage themselves from that kind of activity, and I think that the law is, Your Honor, that you're obligated to sentence him to a sentence which is not greater than necessary to accomplish the objective, as an example, of deterring others or deterring him and the rest of those matters which you, I know, have thought about and will consider before passing sentence.

We ask, therefore, for a total sentence, Your Honor, of 240 months with the conditions that we've also asked to place as recommendations in the Court's commitment record.

Mr. Ventura, do you want to stand up?

You have an absolute right to address Judge Quarles, to speak to him, if you would like. You are not obligated to do so, and he clearly would not hold that against you if you chose not to do so, but, if there is anything which you'd like to add to what you've heard here today, then this would be

your opportunity to do so. 1 2 Would you like to address the Court? 3 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. If I have the opportunity, 4 yes. 5 (Whereupon, Ms. Goldstein enters the courtroom.) THE COURT: Yes. Yes, sir. 6 7 THE DEFENDANT: Good afternoon, Your Honorable 8 Judge. THE COURT: Good afternoon. 9 10 THE DEFENDANT: I wanted to say something, and I 11 want it to be clear to the prosecutors, to Mr. Cunningham, 12 that at no point did I try to lie or manipulate anybody. I 13 just tried to save my life, and I will continue to do so. I see that the Americans here in court already have determined 14 15 what type -- what term of sentence they're going to give me, and I am not going to beg anything. I know that Hispanics are 16 17 discriminated in Federal Court by people like Agent Kelly who 18 is there. 19 And, as you could see, going back to the problem 20 21 I did -- I tried to help her, to get her from the situation 22

with Ms. Rebeca, I met that woman at the end of 2008, and all I did -- I tried to help her, to get her from the situation that she was in, or the problems that she was having with Omar and Flaco that Mr. Kelly knows, and, in order to bother me, they involved the girl. I am not trying to lie. I am not going to lie about anything. I know that, in the appeal, I am

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going to win. I'm just -- I'm just trying to tell you, Your Honor, what the truth is and to tell that gentleman there who gave me the seven charges what is my version of things.

I am going to go to the point, Your Honorable Judge. I beg to bring this person to court. He or she is a Christian person. Josefina Reyes would have given good testimony. She's a good person because she goes to church, and she was taking Rebeca to church all the time. The day that Mr. Kelly and Mr. Hartlove went to see Rebeca -- Ms. Rebeca at home, why didn't they take pictures of her at that time if I had hit her?

Your Honor, I know you're a very intelligent person, and you're very professional, but you can see in the photograph it said 11/11/11, and I was arrested on November 15th, 2010, so how could it have been possible for me to have left jail to go and hit Rebeca?

So am I also threatening with a weapon Ms. Dueñas

Franco and her husband with the delivery they have in

Annapolis now together? So, when she told me this, that

she -- she was arrested in Virginia and she told me this after

I met her and she told me, "I'm desperate. Please take me out

of this situation," and I told her to be patient because I was

married with Jenny Ruiz, the mother of my two children, and so

I told her to wait, to be patient.

I hadn't met her yet, but she told me that she was

arrested by the police in Annapolis and that Mr. Kelly had offered her help with her daughter that they had taken from her. She mentioned also a person by the name of Alex Choco that had paid rent or had gotten her husband, because she had -- she was helping her mother. She had to lie a lot in order to help her mother.

so the only thing I did, Your Honor, as another -as any citizen or U.S. citizen would do, was to recommend her,
to suggest to her to go to the police if somebody was
bothering her or threatening her, and I took her myself to the
court and to the police, and that's the paper that Mr. Kelly
found in my house. That's the evidence.

Your Honor, Mr. Cunningham knows that this girl has been a prostitute since she was 14 in her country because her mother had her -- made her prostitute because she wanted money, and I know that I have given her money -- Rebeca's mother money, and I have the number and the address and all of that, and I also told her that -- "How come you have to do this to give your mother money?" And, if I have denied knowing her to the agents, and also to my lawyer because I was upset with him, I told them, "Please don't -- I'm not interested in other people's lives. Don't ask me about this."

Rebeca was the only person -- I had to help her.

Since I met her, I was the only one to help her. I started helping her -- I told her I would help her, and I started

taking care of her, but I told her, if we're going to be boyfriend and girlfriend, she had to stop being a prostitute, because I wouldn't get involved with a prostitute. I don't know if somebody here has this experience of having a girlfriend outside, but sometimes Ms. Rebeca would escape, leave, and I think it was because of the pressure that she had from her mother when she called and she demanded money.

Your Honor, I know that you already have the decision already made and that they already gave me seven charges, but, if they saw the picture, the picture said, "11/11/11," and I was arrested before that. I have never mistreated any woman. I was with Jenny for ten years, and I've never mistreated anybody, and I broke up with Jenny because of Rebeca, but I've been a man -- a decent man. I was never in the streets. I was -- I always took care of my home.

Your Honor, I came here, and I'm working construction. As Mr. Cunningham said, like all the Latin people that come here, we know very little English, we don't read or write English, but we do everything possible to try to progress and make a living, and I can tell you the name of my sister. My sister, Maria Antonia de Franco Ventura, works in the Congress serving coffee. I don't know how she manages with little English she has, but she serves coffee for the people in Congress. She's a supervisor.

And I have a brother. His name is Solomon Ventura

Solmayon (phon), who didn't go to school. We didn't go to school, but we have made efforts, and our minds have helped us, because we started from below. He works for New Again on Missouri Avenue in Washington, and also for a Chevrolet dealer in Silver Spring. And, if you talk to my brother, you'll see his English is worse than mine. I perhaps speak a little bit better than him.

As I told you, Your Honor, I am not here to argue, but -- about all this injustice and this discrimination, but I know how everything was based on lack of information -- correct information.

In my case, I never went to school, not even in my country. We grew up in a very poor village. It's called La Union. Everybody knows that place, because it's very poor, in El Salvador. But we always try to do the right thing. I never stole anything. Mr. Hartlove made up this thing about the car when he arrested me with another Detective Joy from D.C. They only talked to me about death when they arrested me. And, when I was in front of a judge in Washington, D.C. and the Judge asked me what was missing from the company, he said some names. You can contact Judy Pike, who was the attorney who represented me in Washington. They dismissed my charges, thank goodness.

But all this trickery has come from Mr. Kelly and Mr. Hartlove. They tried to involve me in this so that this

would look very bad in front of a jury. The day of the 1 2 arrest, when you are like under the influence -- what's it 3 called, DUI? I saw the detectives in the casino in Dover town. I would like you to check the calls from 911, because 4 it was from a call from 911 that they stopped me. They saw me 5 with a Heineken beer bottle, and I only drank one beer, 6 7 because I only was one point above the limit of what one 8 person can drink. 9 That was an excuse to arrest me and to search my 10 car. So the detective said, once they stopped me, 11 "Mr. Ventura, can we search your vehicle?" And I said, "Yes, sir." 12

"Are you drunk, sir?"

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And I said, "Yes, I drank one beer."

And he said, "You can drive."

He took me to the police station. I don't know what that place is called. They searched my vehicle. There were no weapons, Your Honor. I may have a temperament that, when I see something that's unfair, my brain starts working, and I try to say, "This is not fair." But I'm not a person that's going to fight with fists with anybody.

So the only thing I did with Ms. Rebeca was to help her, and this gentleman -- the detective presented all this for the jurors to find me guilty. I don't blame the jurors, but, if you see the stickers on the evidence that

Mr. Cunningham presented, it said --

INTERPRETER KIRCHGESSNER: Interpreter requests clarification.

(Interpreter conferring with the Witness.)

THE DEFENDANT: -- "homicide." It said "homicide" on the stickers. I talked to my lawyer. I don't know if my lawyer explained that. I'm just explaining all the mistakes and injustices that were cried out against me in this trial.

I was stopped by Mr. Kelly and Mr. Cunningham on Route 50, and they searched my vehicle, and they found the title -- the title for a Nissan. They told me they could arrest me right away because they told me I couldn't drive because I was on probation, that I could only drive to work.

I hope Mr. Cunningham is not going to come out with a code and say that I'm manipulating the Judge, because I'm not manipulating. I'm just telling the truth. When Mr. Kelly stopped me, there was a passenger, and I told him I was going to help my wife who had a flat tire in Virginia Beach, and I had to go back home to get a credit card because I did not have cash.

So they -- all this following -- all this following and all this search, they did that without authorization.

They did it because they did not have a search warrant for the GPS, and, when they stopped me and they searched the vehicle, the Nissan, Mr. Cunningham was behind the patrol car, and he

was very upset because of that.

Your Honorable Judge, I apologize for all this -- I know I can't do anything about this case now, but perhaps somebody else can do something about all this injustice. Your Honor -- the question is, Your Honor, if I was carrying weapons, and they were following me 24 hours a day, I was being followed and observed at home, at work, on the telephone, and they stopped me on the road, where are the weapons if I had weapons?

I'm not a criminal, but I -- Your Honor,

Mr. Cunningham was following me like a dog following its prey

24 hours a day. I was always -- I could always see him

driving behind me, and Mr. Kelly. They thought I did not see

them, but I saw them all the time, even when I went to a

diner. Mr. Kelly was there. On another occasion,

Mr. Hartlove followed me with a van, a Chrysler van, silver

color with dark windows.

So, Your Honor, I saw Mr. Hartlove taking pictures with a camera when I was painting some lane lines at a Target. Why didn't he show those pictures to the jurors -- to the president of the jury who found me guilty. I'm going to refresh the memory of Mr. Hartlove. It was near Jennifer Road. I was getting lunch when I was working.

So, to conclude, why didn't they show the picture where I'm working, on another occasion at New Hampshire and

Powder Mill Road. I want you to have some consideration about all this injustice. The gentleman showed a text without date or day. Mr. Cunningham showed that text to the public.

November 15th, 2010, I was working at a parking — at a parking lot for a business, commercial building. I was laying 25 yards of asphalt. I was an operator. I don't have the need to sell prostitutes when I make 20 or \$30 per hour minimum. That same day, November of 2010, Mr. Kelly was in a black Honda. I was at a gas station. I could see him. I don't know if anybody has worked in asphalt, but I was filling the runner with water to lay the asphalt. Then a suspicious car followed me. I thought it was some enemy. He was kind of desperate looking for police. So, if I were a criminal or somebody hiding from the law, why would I go to a police station to say somebody's following me?

So they would know because they were following me.

They were following me on New York Avenue and Fifth Street,

N.W. I got to that place. I even work at that place,

Magnolia Plumbing, installing some pipes, because I don't know

if you know I'm also a plumber.

Okay. Your Honor, like he said, we come to the United States. I came to the United States the same way as Ms. Rebeca, and here I am. I made a living, but now they have ruined my life with all these charges -- these ridiculous charges without logic and this blackmail. I have never sold

prostitutes.

In order to finish my sermon, Your Honor, in the trial, there were many mistakes. We start with, number one, the speedy trial, the civil rights or constitutional rights — I don't know what you call them. When you get arrested and you are read your rights, I was not read my rights. Your Honor, you're a witness that you sat against me in court, and I asked for a lawyer. They continued recording me. The GPS is a very serious infraction as well.

The evidence -- the evidence was about death, not prostitution. That was another violation. Forced testimony of Ms. Rebeca. She said that -- she said that this and that was done to her, but, before she said I was a great person. They made a big mistake. They should have taken pictures of her the first day they arrested her when they went to her house. There is a witness that's willing to testify in the new trial. Her name is Josefina Reyes.

She's -- he's a friend of -- a friend of mine who grew up with me in El Salvador. I did not put Rebeca in that filthy place like Ms. Yasser says, no. So I want to tell Mr. President here, that Capitol Heights is very far from Langley Park. If I had hit her, she would have gone to the police.

When I was arrested, Rebeca was pregnant, Your Honor. And maybe Mr. Cunningham didn't say that because he

wants to make me look like a bad person. Only God knows my heart. I try to help people. She was pregnant when I got arrested. I had already paid two months' rent in advance, so I could -- so, if you check the risks I have taken, there is no benefit. In my case, I was paying rent and also mortgage -- the rent for Rebeca and also the mortgage for my house.

And I have -- I would like to tell you, Your Honor, that I -- my mother, who is old, is 70 years old, I have supported her since I'm a little boy. That's why I didn't go to school. Her name is Iaria Ventura, and I support her.

So, as you can see, Your Honor, it was very difficult for me. I was supporting two women, Rebeca and my mother, and I was making \$20 an hour. The company was S&J, was not doing very well. My company was not doing very well. There was an economic crisis, and so there was no forcing or anything, but there was some humanitarian help, and I do not blame Ms. Rebeca.

Ms. Rebeca already had a record for prostitution. She had been arrested many times before.

THE COURT: Mr. Ventura, it's been over an hour now, and I want to make sure that you had an opportunity to fully express yourself. Now, you -- you've spent most of the past hour talking about the facts of the case.

THE DEFENDANT: Thank you for the opportunity.

THE COURT: At this point, I need to hear, briefly, 1 2 anything from you that you think I should know before I impose 3 sentence. Please wrap up. THE DEFENDANT: That depends on your professionalism 4 and your heart, Your Honor. I can't force anybody, but I 5 would like you to give me the opportunity to appeal this. 6 7 THE COURT: You will have that opportunity. 8 THE DEFENDANT: I will try and bring my witnesses. THE COURT: You will have an opportunity. You will 9 10 have an opportunity. 11 THE DEFENDANT: And I thank you very much for the 12 opportunity. Whatever you decide, I know I have no rights. 13 I'm a Hispanic here. 14 (Conference at the bench.) 15 (It is the policy of this Court that every guilty plea and sentencing proceeding include a bench 16 conference concerning whether the defendant is 17 18 or is not cooperating.) 19 THE COURT: Thank you. Please remain standing. 20 Mr. Ventura is 35 years old and has a 2010 21 conviction for driving while impaired. Three other arrests 22 did not lead to convictions. He is in Criminal History 23 Category I. 24 On April 22, 2013, he was convicted of conspiracy 25 related to interstate prostitution; interstate transportation

for prostitution; persuading, inducing, enticing, and coercing an individual to travel in interstate commerce for prostitution and illegal sexual activity; sex trafficking by force, fraud and coercion; and possession of firearms in furtherance of a crime of violence.

With the adjustments discussed earlier, his offense level is 42. Other than that sentence required to be imposed consecutively to others and those sentences with less than a 360-month maximum, his guidelines are at 360 months to life.

Mr. Ventura, as indicated, was born in El Salvador, apparently from a broken home. He does not know his father and has no formal education. He entered the United States in 1997, is here illegally. He has been married, although I understand that may be ending. He has three children. He has, as his attorney has alluded to, some past apparently significant cocaine use, and he has worked in construction.

The Defendant has suggested a number of reasons the sentence should be mitigated. Principal among these has been conditions of confinement, and I explain to him, as I do to all defendants here generally, that one of the difficulties I have in imposing sentence based on a reduction for conditions of confinement is that I have no principled basis for applying the reduction. Many of the problems he discussed were the problems that continue to plague the Chesapeake Detention Facility during this what I describe still as a shakedown

period and our efforts to provide a local detention facility.

A brief review of the medical records indicates that, with respect to the administrative segregation he's talked about, this appears to be largely self-inflicted, brought on by, among other things, the necessity to maintain a suicide watch on the Defendant, and such other behavior of the Defendant, such as an incident in which he apparently set his cell on fire. I also note that the Defendant has refused medical care when it has been offered.

Most disturbing in this case has been the

Defendant's willingness to threaten and use violence in
furtherance of this venture, recalling specifically the

testimony of Sandra Flores about the gasoline poured on the
door and the phone threats to do away with her and her family
after she sheltered Ms. Rebeca; the testimony of Maximilliano

Zelaya Repalo, who saw Mr. Ventura, who he knew as Chalo, with
a gun in the car, in a brothel, and several places; the

testimony of Mr. Carlos Campos, who saw Mr. Ventura, who knew
him as Pancho, with a shoebox containing a 9mm pistol; the

testimony of Mr. Carlos Ascencio, who saw Mr. Ventura with a

9mm pistol as well as a .38-calibre revolver; and the

testimony of Ferman Martinez Hernandez, who placed Mr. Ventura
in possession of a shotgun.

Given the Defendant's high-level involvement in this tawdry enterprise and his willingness to use violence in an

effort to monopolize prostitution in Annapolis, I have concluded that sentences at the bottom of the advisory sentencing guidelines are sufficient in this case but not greater than necessary to reflect the seriousness of these offenses, provide just punishment and adequate deterrence, promote respect for the law, and protect the public from further crimes of the Defendant.

Accordingly, I impose the following terms of imprisonment: On Count 1, I impose a term of imprisonment of 60, 6-0, months; on Counts 2, 4, and 5, concurrent 120-month terms; on Count 3, a concurrent 240-month term; on Count 6 and 7, I impose concurrent 360-month terms. I'm sorry. On Count 6, I impose a concurrent 360-month term, all of those sentences on Counts 1 through 6 to be run concurrently. As to Count 7, I impose a consecutive 60, 6-0, month term. That sentence will be served consecutively to sentences imposed on Counts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, for a total sentence of 420 months.

I impose the following terms of supervised release on those counts, which I believe statutorily require a term of supervised release. On Counts 2 through 6, I impose concurrent five-year terms, with the exception of Count 3 -- on each of the counts. On Counts 2, 3, 4, and 5, there are five-year terms, with the following special conditions: Drug and alcohol screening and treatment, vocational and

educational services as prescribed by the probation officer, 1 2 an effort to obtain the GED if that is not accomplished in the Bureau of Prisons, and that the Defendant comply with and 3 follow all lawful orders entered in his Immigration matters. 4 I waive the imposition of fine, and I impose, as I 5 must, on each of the seven counts of conviction, a \$100 6 7 special assessment, for a total special assessment of \$700. 8 Mr. Ventura, do you understand the sentence? THE DEFENDANT: As I said before, Your Honor, 9 10 whatever you decide. 11 THE COURT: Thank you. You have 14 days from 12 today's date to file an appeal. If you cannot afford to pay a 13 filing fee, you can appeal without a fee. 14 Madam Clerk, the recommendation for place of 15 incarceration will be Butner FCI with a request that mental health, GED, and vocational/educational services be provided. 16 I also recommend, for what it's worth, the RDAP program. 17 18 Yes? 19 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, Your Honor. In anticipation 20 of appellate litigation, would Your Honor state that, 21 independent of the guideline calculation, you have concluded 22 that the sentence you imposed was that which was necessary but 23 not greater than appropriate in this case.

THE COURT: This is one of those cases in which I

can say that, in fact, Mr. Cunningham.

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MR. CUNNINGHAM:
                                  Thank you.
 1
 2
                 THE COURT: Anything further from the Government?
 3
                 MR. CUNNINGHAM: No, Your Honor.
                 THE COURT: From the Defense?
 4
 5
                 MR. RUTER: No, Your Honor.
                 THE COURT: Thank you. Good day, Mr. Ventura.
 6
 7
                 Thank you, Ms. Kirchgessner and Ms. Goldstein.
 8
                 THE DEFENDANT: Excuse me. Excuse me.
 9
                 THE COURT: Yes, sir?
10
                 THE DEFENDANT: Your Honor, how am I about to appeal
11
       if I don't have any documents or any transcripts or anything
12
       in front of me?
13
                 THE COURT: You will have an attorney appointed to
14
       represent you on appeal. That attorney will have full access
15
       to all of the materials in this case, and he will be given
16
       every assistance to ensure that your rights on appeal are
17
       protected.
18
                 THE DEFENDANT: Who is going to be my attorney?
19
                 THE COURT: I don't know. I don't make that
20
       decision.
21
                 Good day.
22
                 THE CLERK: All rise. This Honorable Court stands
23
       in recess.
24
                 (Proceedings adjourned.)
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1	I, Martin J. Giordano, Registered Merit Reporter and Certified			
2	Realtime Reporter, certify that the foregoing is a correct			
3	transcript from the record of proceedings in the			
4	above-entitled matter.			
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7	Martin J. Giordano, RMR, CRR Date			
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